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Review of existing standards

Prunes

Document submitted by France

This document was prepared by the Rapporteur (France) to align the current standard for prunes with the new Standard Layout. It had been presented for the first time at the 2017 session of the Specialized Section. An additional amendment proposed by the Rapporteur is highlighted. The Specialized Section is invited to review and discuss this revised text.

It is prepared according to ECE/CTCS/2015/7 (part II, section A, subsection c).

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I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to certain varieties (cultivars) of prunes grown from *Prunus domestica L.* considered suitable for drying to be supplied for direct consumption or intended to be mixed with other products for direct consumption without further processing.

It does not apply to prunes that have been salted, sugared, flavoured or roasted or that are intended for industrial processing.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for prunes at the export-control stage, after preparation and packaging.

However, after export, the holder shall be responsible for observing the requirements of the standard. The holder/seller of products not in conformity with this standard may not display such products or offer them for sale or sell, deliver or market them in any other manner.

A. Minimum requirements

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the prunes must display the following characteristics.

The prunes must be:

- intact; however, slight superficial damage is not considered as a defect [Individual standards may provide that the produce need not be intact, depending on the nature of the produce and its intended presentation.]
- whole or without pits, without peduncles
- fleshy, the flesh being elastic and pliable
- covered with a wrinkled skin
- sound, produce being affected by decay (rot) or damaged in such a way as to be unfit for consumption being excluded
- clean and practically free from obvious foreign matter[2]
- sufficiently developed
- free from living pests, whatever their stage of development
- free from damage caused by pests, including the presence of dead insects and/or mites, their debris or excreta

[1] Definitions of terms and defects are listed in Annex III of the Standard Layout — Recommended terms and definition of defects for standards of dry (Inshell Nuts and Nut Kernels) and dried produce. See http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/agr/standard/dry/StandardLayout/StandardLayout_DDP_e.pdf.

[2] Added ingredients are not considered as foreign material, provided they are not prohibited by the legislation of the importing country.

- free from blemishes, areas of discolouration or spread stains in pronounced contrast with the rest of the produce affecting in aggregate more than ... per cent of the surface of the produce
- free from mould filaments visible to the naked eye
- free of fermentation
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of foreign smell and/or taste, except for a taste of sodium chloride [and a slight smell of preservatives/additives]

The condition of the prunes must be such as to enable them:

- to withstand transport and handling, and
- to arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination

B. Moisture content[1]

The prunes shall have a moisture content not exceeding 35.0 per cent.

For prunes with a high moisture content, preservatives may be used, taking into consideration the regulations applicable in the importing country.

C. Classification

In accordance with the defects permitted in section "IV. Provisions concerning tolerances", prunes are classified into the following classes: Class I and Class II.

The permitted defects must not affect the general appearance of the produce or its quality, keeping quality or presentation in the package.

According to their type of presentation, prunes are classified in one of the two classes defined below:

(i) **Whole** prunes are classified in one class, called "Prunes" — "Class I".

They must be of good quality and characteristic of the variety or commercial type of plum used. They may show slight superficial defects and colour defects, provided that these do not affect the general appearance of the produce or its quality, keeping quality or presentation in the package.

(ii) Prunes **without pits** are classified into two classes defined below:

- "Prunes without pits" — "Class I": Prunes in this class must be pitted by an appropriate process such as to minimize the damage to the skin, and the number of cuts necessary to pit the prunes is limited to two cuts.
- "Pressure-pitted prunes" — "Type E" or "Class II": Prunes in this class may be pitted by pressure. The number of cuts necessary to pit these prunes is not limited.

[1] The moisture content is determined by one of the methods given in Annex I of the Standard Layout – Determination of the moisture content for dried produce. See http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/agr/standard/dry/StandardLayout/StandardLayoutDDP_e.pdf. The laboratory reference method shall be used in cases of dispute.

III. Provisions concerning sizing

Whatever their mode of packaging, prunes and pitted prunes must previously have undergone sizing determined by the minimum and maximum number of prunes in 500 g (or in 1 lb (453 g)), in relation to the moisture content marked on the package according to the following scales:

A. European designations "Prunes"

Designation	*Number of prunes per 500 g*	*Number of prunes per 453 g*
Super giant	**not more than 33 prunes**	**not more than 30 prunes**
Giant	**from 34 to 44 prunes**	**from 30 to 40 prunes**
Very large	from 44 to 55 prunes	from 40 to 50 prunes
Large	from 55 to 66 prunes	from 50 to 60 prunes
Medium	from 66 to 77 prunes	from 60 to 70 prunes
Small	from 77 to 99 prunes	from 70 to 90 prunes
Very small	more than 99 prunes	more than 90 prunes

B. American designation "Prunes"

Designation	*Number of prunes per 500 g*	*Number of prunes per 453 g*
Jumbo	Not more than 28 prunes	Not more than 25 prunes
Extra large	from 28 to 44 prunes	from 25 to 40 prunes
Large	from 44 to 66 prunes	from 40 to 60 prunes
Medium	from 66 to 94 prunes	from 60 to 85 prunes
Small	from 94 to 110 prunes	from 85 to 100 prunes

C. "Pitted Prunes" — "Class I"

For pitted prunes, the size is determined by the counts taken before the pits have been removed from the prunes.

- Large: not more than 67 prunes in 500 g/not more than 60 prunes in 453 g
- Medium: more than 67 prunes in 500 g/more than 60 prunes in 453 g

D. "Pressure-Pitted Prunes" — "Type E", "Class II"

Sizing of pressure-pitted prunes is not obligatory unless they are sold in small packages intended for the consumer.

IV. Provisions concerning tolerances

At all stages of marketing, tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each consignment for produce not satisfying the minimum characteristics of the class indicated.

A. Quality tolerances

Permitted defect[4] *(percentages by weight)*	*Prunes* *Class I*	*Pitted prunes* *Class I*	*Pressure-pitted prunes* *Class II*
A. Total tolerance	12	12	15
B. Individual defect			
Within the limits of the total tolerances, the maximum allowed are:			
i/ non-characteristic colour and texture	12	12	15
ii/ end cracks	12	12	15
iii/ skin or flesh damage, calluses, heat injury, insect damage	8	2	4
iv/ fermentation	4	2	4
v/ foreign matter **of vegetable origin**	1	1	1
vi/ slight decay, mould[5,6]	1	0.5	2
vii/ fruit infested by insects or mites[5]	0.5	0.5	0.5
C. For pitted prunes			
viii/ with whole pits	-	2	4
ix/ with pieces of pits	2	2	4

No tolerance is accepted for live parasites.

B. Mineral impurities

Not greater than 1 g/kg acid insoluble ash.

C. Size tolerances

The method of determining sizing uniformity is specified in the annex to this standard.

Proposal — delete the reference to the annex and insert the information directly into the main text:

[4] Standard definitions of terms and defects are listed in the annex of this document.

[5] The national legislations of Germany and Switzerland do not permit tolerances for produce affected by mould or rot or the presence of dead or living insects.

[6] Poland favours a maximum tolerance for slight decay and mould of 0.5 per cent in all classes.

Prunes packed in accordance with the sizing methods established in this standard must be reasonably uniform in size.

In a sample of 5 kg of fruit taken from a given consignment, the difference between the number of the smallest prunes and that of the largest prunes per 500 g must not exceed:

(a) 25 for consignments of prunes of sizes ranging from 44 to 55 prunes per 500 g;

(b) 35 for consignments of prunes of sizes ranging from 55 to 77 prunes per 500 g;

(c) 45 for consignments of prunes containing more than 77 prunes per 500 g.

The difference is calculated by reference to 10 per cent (by weight) of the sample for the smallest prunes and 10 per cent (by weight) for the largest.

V. Provisions concerning presentation

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package[7] must be uniform and contain only prunes of the same origin, quality and size (if sized), and variety or commercial type if indicated.

The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of the entire contents.

Prunes in Class I must be of the same variety or the same commercial type.

B. Packaging

Prunes must be packed in such a way so as to protect the produce properly.

The materials used inside the package must be clean and of a quality so as to avoid causing any external or internal damage to the produce. The use of materials, particularly

[7] ~~(Definitions: The term "packages" covers "sales packages" and "pre-packages". Packages are individually packaged parts of a lot, including contents. The packaging is conceived so as to facilitate handling and transport of a number of sales packages or of loose or arranged produce, in order to prevent damage by physical handling and transport. The package may constitute a sales package. Road, rail, ship and air containers are not considered as packages. Sales packages are individually packaged parts of a lot, including contents. The packaging of sales packages is conceived so as to constitute a sales unit to the final user or consumer at the point of purchase.)~~
Proposal to include definitions in the glossary of terms:

Package: Individual packages conceived to facilitate handling and transport of a number of sales packages or of produce loose or arranged, in order to prevent damage caused by handling, transport, or contaminants (for example cartons, plastic bags, pallet boxes, etc.). The package may constitute a sales package. Road, rail, ship and air containers are not considered as packages.

Sales package: Individual packages conceived to constitute a sales unit to the final user or consumer at the point of purchase.

Pre-packages are sales packages such as the packaging enclosing the foodstuff completely or only partially, but in such a way that the contents cannot be altered without opening or changing the packaging. Protective films covering a single produce are not considered as pre-packages.

paper or stamps bearing trade specifications, is allowed provided the printing or labelling has been done with non-toxic ink or glue.

Packages must be free of all foreign matter in accordance with the table of tolerances in section "IV. Provisions concerning tolerances".

C. Presentation

Prunes must be presented either:

- in small packages of 0.125 kg, 0.250 kg, 0.500 kg or 1 kg; the use of other units of weight may be admitted depending on the regulations applicable in the importing country; or
- in packages weighing 1.5 kg or more.

VI. Provisions concerning marking

Each package[3] must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside:

A. Identification

Packer and/or dispatcher/shipper: Name and physical address (e.g. street/city/region/postal code and, if different from the country of origin, the country) or a code mark officially recognized by the national authority.[4]

B. Nature of the produce

- Name of the produce: the words "prunes", "pitted prunes" or "pressure-pitted prunes"
- For Class I: the name of the variety or commercial designation accepted in reputable commercial practice
- Moisture content indicated by:
  - When the moisture content is between 24 per cent and 29 per cent inclusive: "maximum moisture content 29 per cent" and/or "semi-dry",
  - When the moisture content is between 29 per cent and 35 per cent inclusive: "maximum moisture content 35 per cent" and/or "ready to eat",
  - For prunes with moisture content equal to or less than 24 per cent: no marking indicating moisture content is necessary.

[3] These marking provisions do not apply to sales packages presented in packages.

[4] The national legislation of a number of countries requires the explicit declaration of the name and address. However, in cases where a code mark is used, the reference "packer and/or dispatcher" (or equivalent abbreviations) has to be indicated in close connection with the code mark, and the code mark should be preceded with the ISO 3166 (alpha) country code of the recognizing country, if it is not the country of origin.

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin[10] and, optionally, the district where grown or the national, regional or local place name

D. Commercial specifications

- class
- size (if produce is sized); expressed in accordance with the provisions of section III, either:
  - as the minimum and maximum number of prunes contained in 500g (or in 453 g), by "X/Y prunes per 500 g"; or
  - by the corresponding designation, followed by the minimum and maximum number of prunes contained in 500 g (or in 453 g)
- crop year {according to the nature of the produce}
- "Best before" followed by the date (optional)
- net weight.

E. Official control mark (optional)

[10] The full name or commonly used name should be given.

[Annex

Definitions of terms and defects for prunes

(Based on Annex III of the Standard Layout)

(a) **End cracks**: callous growth-cracks, occurring at the ends of prunes, whose total length may be more than 10 mm (25/64 inch) but less than 15 mm (38/64 inch).

(b) **Damage to skin or flesh**:

(1) Callous-like growth scars (except end cracks) whose total is more than 10 mm (25/64 inch).

(2) Cracks, splits or breaks down to the stone.

(3) Splits or breaks exposing a substantial part of the flesh and seriously affecting the appearance of the fruit.

(c) **Fermentation**: the existence of fermentation is evidenced by a distinctly sour taste or odour or by the darkening in colour associated with fermentation or acidity.

(d) **Callosities**: surface callosities (other than cracks) of more than 10 mm (25/64 inch) in diameter, and areas of thin lacy crackle of more than 20 mm (50/64 inch) in diameter.

(e) **Heat injury**: damage by sunburn or excessive heat during dehydration which substantially affects the appearance, flavour or normal edibility of the prune.

(f) **Insect damage**: visible damage caused by insects and animal pests.

(g) **Presence of dead insects and/or mites**.

(h) **Peduncle**: the part of the stem which attaches the plum to the branch.

(i) **Mould**: mould filaments visible to the naked eye.

(j) **Decay**: decomposition caused by bacteria or fungi making the flesh of the prune unfit for consumption.

(k) **Foreign matter of vegetable origin**: leaves, peduncles, twigs, bits of wood, soil or similar matter.

(l) **Mineral impurities:** acid insoluble ash.]